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ABSTRACT

Summaries are presented of individual state practices for collecting selected universe terms and data elements for the Education Data Improvement Project of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Project is a joint effort of the states and Federal government to improve the quality and timeliness of data collected, analyzed, and reported by the Center for Education Statistics. The Project describes state collection of data elements for inclusion in the Center's common core of data. The current universe files contain listings of every elementary and secondary public school (approximately 87,000) in about 16,000 public school districts. Universe files have three major purposes: (1) to provide state-by-state listings of schools and districts; (2) to provide minimum information necessary for selection of national, regional, and state representative samples of schools and school districts; and (3) to provide basic statistical data about all schools and districts. Findings are summarized in four tables showing state-by-state responses to each data element by the lowest level of aggregation for each. Data elements are clustered by student counts, student status, Federal program, and staff. Tables provide the information that allows judgments to be made for improvement of the comprehensiveness of national statistics, but they do not illustrate the variations that affect comparability. (SLD)

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COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
State Education Assessment Center

Education Data Improvement Project

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Center for Statistics

September 1986

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SUMMARY: STATE COLLECTION PRACTICES ON UNIVERSE DATA ELEMENTS

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Improving Universe Data on Schools and School Districts

SUMMARY: STATE COLLECTION PRACTICES ON UNIVERSE DATA ELEMENTS

September 1986

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to the
State Profiles of School and School District Universe Data

The Common Core of Data Coordinators, designated by their chief state school officers as the official state liaisons with the Center for Statistics, are the primary respondents to the Project. The data presented here could not have been developed without substantial efforts by these data coordinators, who provided the information necessary to present state by state comparisons of data collection practices. Many thanks to those listed below who were instrumental in completing the Shuttle and kindly providing further information via telephone calls and verification procedures.

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PREFACE

This document is one of a series of reports resulting from the Council of Chief State School Officers' Education Data Improvement Project. The Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics, is a joint effort of the states and the federal government to improve the quality and timeliness of data collected, analyzed and reported by the Center. The Project was initiated by the Council as the first effort of its State Education Assessment Center and coincided with the Department of Education's extensive redesign of the national elementary/secondary education statistical data system. Improvement of the Center's Common Core of Data collected annually from state education agencies is the Project's primary goal.

In November, 1984, the Council of Chief State School Officers voted to "work actively with the National Center for Education Statistics (currently the Center for Statistics) to ensure that reporting of data from all sources is accurate and timely." This vote committed the Council to improving the comprehensiveness, comparability, and timeliness of data reported to the Center for Statistics by the state education agencies.

In several recent speeches and interviews, Chester E. Finn, Jr., Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), listed four goals for strengthening the nation's ability to achieve educational excellence. The Department of Education's primary goal - to significantly improve the nation's educational statistical information base, both in the amount and quality of data - suggests substantial interest in the work and goals of the Education Data Improvement Project.

The Center for Statistics and the states jointly share responsibility for a statistical system in education that is inadequate for today's needs. This project is one effort wherein they are working together to make the basic system efficient and effective.

The goals of the Project are to describe state collection of data elements currently contained in the Common Core of Data, to describe those elements that might be added to make the Common Core of Data adequate and appropriate for reporting on the condition of the nation's schools, and to make recommendations to states and the Center for Statistics for making the Common Core of Data more comprehensive, comparable and timely. During this first year of the Project, the focus has been on the school and school district universe files.

The Project is examining the universe files, to identify all states collecting specific data elements, to specify in detail the definitions and specifications used by each of the states for each data element, and to isolate discrepancies in ways different states define and measure those various elements. This current report presents summaries of individual state practices for collecting selected universe terms and data elements.

INTRODUCTION

Universe Data on Schools and School Districts

The Council of Chief State School Officers, jointly with the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics, is conducting a project to improve the quality and timeliness of nationally reported data on elementary and secondary education. The Education Data Improvement Project was designed to promote and facilitate the reform and refinement of the Center for Statistics' national education statistical data system.

One major aspect of the Project is a systematic assessment and comparison of state collection practices for school and school district universe data. The current universe files contain listings of every elementary and secondary public school (approximately 87,000) and all local public school districts (approximately 16,000) in every state, U. S. Territory, and the District of Columbia. There are three major purposes for universe files: (1) to provide official state-by-state listings of public elementary and secondary schools and school districts in this country, (2) to provide minimum information necessary for selection of national, regional and state representative samples of schools and school districts, and (3) to provide basic statistical data about all schools and school districts.

Project Processes and Analyses

The Education Data Improvement Project's data collection process is multifaceted: data are collected from several sources and supplemented either by individual and group interviews, or by task forces and study

groups. Over the several iterations, true state and national profiles will emerge. Where discrepancies are found across a number of states, meetings will be convened to arrive at consensus on specific data elements, definitions, or measurement procedures. Where problems are found with a single state or with a few states, negotiations will establish crosswalks[1] between the state(s) and the Center for Statistics. Where states have better, more efficient definitions and procedures than currently used by the Center for Statistics, recommendations will be made to change the national system.

This Report

The first year of the Project is described in a series of reports under the general title, "Improving Universe Data on Schools and School Districts." This report is part of that series; other reports in the series include "Technical Report: Conceptual Framework," "Development of a Shuttle for Verifying Data Elements Collected by State Departments of Education and Reported to the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics," and "A Compendium: State Profiles of School and School District Universe Data." Several white papers complete the series, including "Data Elements on the School and School District Universe Files to Permit Sampling for National, Regional, and State Studies," "Federal Program Information on School and School District Universe Files," "School and Student Classifications for Universe Data Files", "Variations in Definitions and procedures for Student Counts: Enrollment, Fall Enrollment, Membership, and Average Daily Membership" and "Collecting National Statistics on Dropouts." This report, "Summary: State

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1 A crosswalk provides a method for translating data collected by states into categories and definitions comparable to those proposed by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics. This allows states to maintain the data for their own purposes while providing a bridge to the national educational data system.

Collection Practices on Universe Data Elements," describes state collection practices for specific data elements that are being considered for the revised universe files.

This report compares school and school district data collection by and across states, and by specific data elements. The information in this report provides a basis for Project recommendations, both to the Center for Statistics and to individual states, for improving comprehensiveness and comparability of national public elementary and secondary school and school district universe files. Recommendations will be made to the Center for Statistics on the availability and use of these data, and to the individual states for reporting comparable data across all states.

The findings are summarized in tables showing state-by-state responses to each data element by the lowest level of aggregation for each. The data elements are clustered by student counts, student status, federal programs, and staff. The tables are presented so that comparisons can be made across states and within data elements. The tables provide information that allows judgments to be made for the improvement of the comprehensiveness of national statistics; but they do not illustrate the variations in state definitions and specifications that affect comparability.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATE COLLECTION OF UNIVERSE DATA ELEMENTS

The Project gathered information from each of 48 responding states and the District of Columbia on specific practices individual states use to collect data in three universe categories: students, programs, and staff. States were asked to indicate data elements currently collected, to specify the lowest level of aggregation (school, district or other) at which each is collected, and, within individual data categories, to indicate whether information is collected by race/ethnic, sex, grade, head count and Full Time Equivalency (FTE). The summary tables for each category discussed below provide state-specific information on data collection practices. The following discussion is organized around the three data categories.

Student Data

Seven data elements concerning students were surveyed to determine if and how data are collected and categorized. Three categories deal with numbers of students classified by setting--Public School, Nonpublic School, and Educated-at-Home Students; four deal with numbers of students classified by status--Dropouts, Graduates, and Suspended and Expelled Students.

Table 1. Student Counts Data

Table 1 presents a state-by-state summary of data elements commonly used for determining the numbers of students served in three education settings. Public and Nonpublic student categories are presented according to the method by which students are counted (membership or enrollment), and whether this information is available by grade, sex, and race/ethnic. Educated-at-Home students are examined by head count, sex, and race/ethnic.

All responding state education agencies report that public school student counts are available by enrollment, by membership, or by both. Forty-seven states report these figures at school level by grade. Thirty-nine states currently collect school level student counts by race/ethnic, and thirty-five, by sex.

Public School Students

	School	District
by enrollment/membership	47	2
by enrollment	34	4
by membership	31	7
by grade	47	2
by sex	35	3
by race/ethnic	39	1

Nonpublic school student information is less available from state education agencies. Enrollment and membership counts are provided by 26 and 18 states respectively, with 39 states providing either one or both of those counts. Thirty-three states have their nonpublic student counts available by grade. Sex and race/ethnic breakdowns are less widely available; 22 states provide sex breakdowns; race/ethnic counts are supplied by 16 states.

Nonpublic School Students

	School	District
by enrollment/membership	39	
by enrollment	26	
by membership	18	1
by grade	33	
by sex	22	1
by race/ethnic	15	1

Twenty-one states provide headcounts for educated-at-home students; they vary in having data available at individual student, school, district and state levels. Fewer than a dozen states currently have sex and race/ethnic information for educated-at-home students.

Educated-at-Home Students	School	District	Other
by headcount	5	11	5
by sex	3	5	2
by race ethnic	2	2	2

Table 2. Student Status Data

State-by-state summaries for the four student status categories are shown in Table 2. Headcounts for dropouts are available in 40 states (23 at school level, 18 at district level).[2] Sex and race/ethnic breakdowns of dropouts are available in 30 and 25 states, respectively. Data are less available for suspended and expelled students: 18 states provide head counts of expelled students and 11 of suspended students.

Dropouts	School	District
by head count	23	18
by sex	17	13
by race/ethnic	15	10

Forty-eight states collect head counts of high school graduates (34 at school level, 14 at district level). Forty-three states report the number of students who receive diplomas; 15 states report counts of students who receive certificates; and 33 states have GED completion figures available. The largest reporting level for GED counts is "other"; in this case, "other" generally refers to GED testing centers, which are neither school- nor district-specific.

[2] The definition of dropouts is especially problematic. This topic is addressed fully in a companion to this report, "Collecting National Statistics on Dropouts."

Graduate	School	District	Other
by head count	34	14	
by diploma	31	12	
by certificate	12	2	1
by GED	13	4	16

Table 3. Program Data

Data collection practices in eight categorical education programs were surveyed. These data are presented in state-by-state form in Table 3. Data on state compensatory education programs are available in 18 states. This appears to correspond to states with identified state programs. Data on other programs (except Migrant and Bilingual Education) are available in 40 or more states. Further, Vocational Education and Special Education programs are more widely collected at the school level, 36 and 30 states respectively, than other programs which are more evenly split between school and district level aggregations. Information concerning the presence (or absence) of a program in a school is generally more available than is the number of students served by these programs. In sum, data are generally available in at least 40 of the responding states but the level of aggregation (school or district) varies across programs and the states.

Program Data

	By Program			By Number of Students		
	School	Dist.	Other	School	Dist.	Other
Chapter I	24	22		20	22	
State Compensatory	10	8		10	8	
Voc. Ed.	36	12		29	10	3
School Breakfast	29	17		26	17	
School Lunch	28	18		25	18	
Special Ed.	30	18	1	28	18	1
Migrant Ed.	14	24	3	14	19	3
Bilingual Ed.	16	16	2	16	15	2

A detailed description of issues related to reporting federal program information on the universe files and specific recommendations are presented in a companion report, "Federal Program Information on School and School District Universe Files."

Table 4. Staff Data

There were three education staff categories examined: Teachers, Administrators and Other Certified Noninstructional School-based Staff. State summaries of these data are shown in Table 4.

All responding states can provide data, either by FTE or by Head Count, for these three staff categories. There is divergence among states in terms of the level of aggregation--school or district--of these counts. A majority (more than 25) of states collect both FTE and headcounts at the school level, and additional states can provide data at the district level. Perhaps some of the divergence seen in these elements can be attributed to the gray areas and definitional problems between two of these elements--Administrator and Other Certified Non-Instructional School-based Staff.

Sex and race/ethnic breakdowns for teachers are available at the school level in 36 and 34 states, respectively. Grade breakdowns for teachers are available in 28 states (26 school level, 2 district level). For administrators, sex and race breakdowns are available in 40 and 35 states, respectively.

Staff Data

Teacher

	School	Dist.
by FTE/head count	40	9
by FTE	36	9
by head count	36	5
by grade	26	2
by sex	36	9
by race/ethnic	34	4

Administrator

	School	Dist.	Other
school-based	34	14	
district-based	11	37	1
certified/noncert.	26	10	
by FTE/head count	38	11	
by FTE	27	13	
by head count	30	9	
by sex	32	8	
by race/ethnic	28	7	

Other Cert. Noninstruct. School-based Staff

	School	Dist.	Other
by FTE/head count	30	18	1
by FTE	25	13	1
by head count	25	11	1

TABLE 1. STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY OF STUDENTS COUNTS DATA

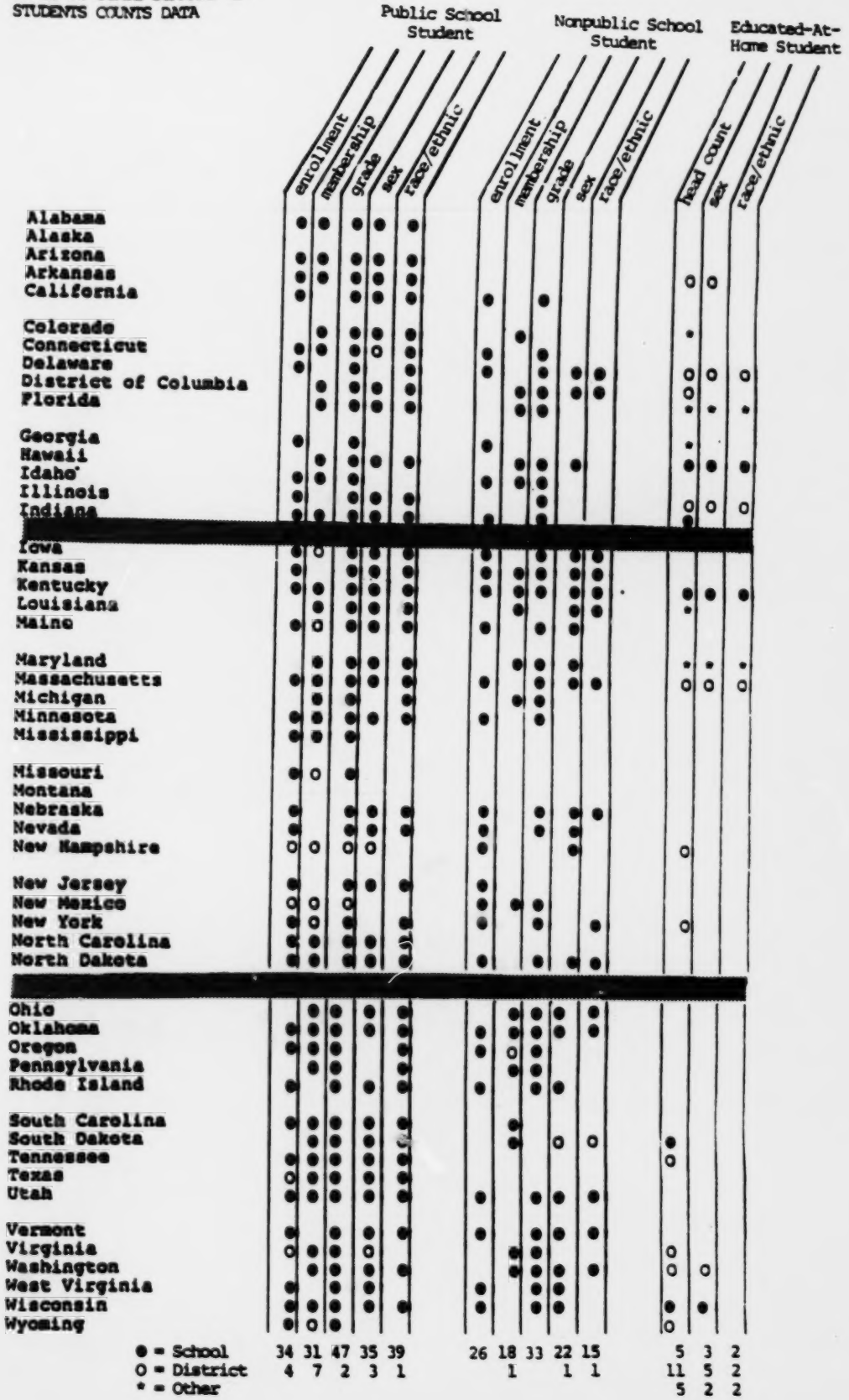

TABLE 2a. STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY OF DATA ON DROPOUTS AND GRADUATES

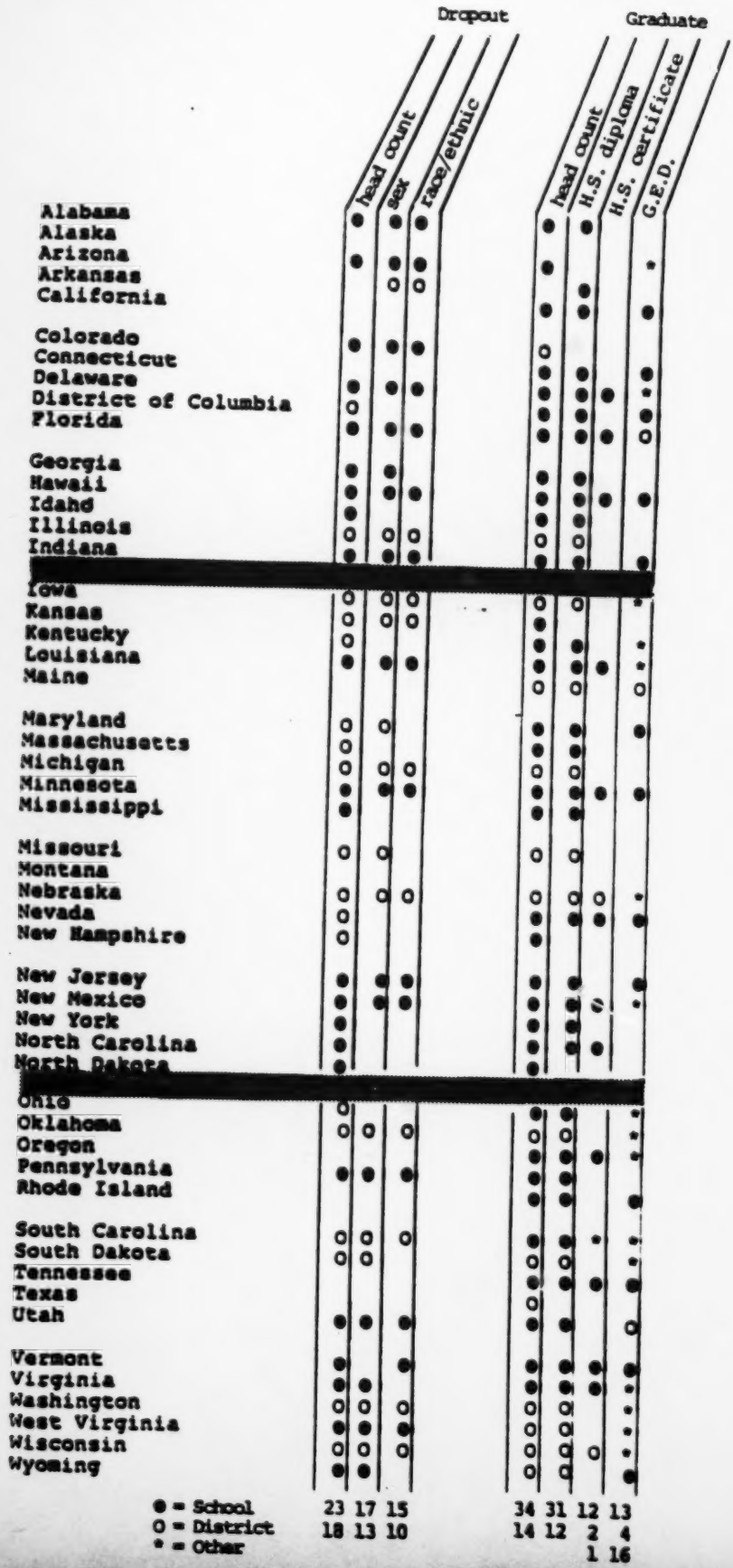

TABLE 2b. STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY OF DATA ON SUSPENDED AND EXPELLED STUDENTS

	Suspended Student				Expelled Student			
	head count	grade	race/ethnic	sex	head count	grade	race/ethnic	sex
Alabama								
Alaska								
Arizona								
Arkansas								
California								
Colorado								
Connecticut								
Delaware								
District of Columbia	X	X		X				
Florida	X		X	X	X		X	X
Georgia								
Hawaii								
Idaho	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Illinois	X		X	X	X		X	X
Indiana					X			
Iowa								
Kansas								
Kentucky					X	X		
Louisiana	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maine	X			X	X			X
Maryland			X	X	X	X		X
Massachusetts					X			
Michigan								
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi								
Missouri								
Montana								
Nebraska					X	X	X	X
Nevada								
New Hampshire					X			
New Jersey	X	X	X	X	X			
New Mexico								
New York								
North Carolina	X	X			X	X		
North Dakota								
Ohio								
Oklahoma								
Oregon								
Pennsylvania					X		X	X
Rhode Island								
South Carolina	X	X		X	X	X		X
South Dakota								
Tennessee	X				X	X		
Texas								
Utah								
Vermont								
Virginia								
Washington								
West Virginia								
Wisconsin					X			
Wyoming								
	11	7	7	10	18	9	7	10

TABLE 3. STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY OF DATA ON STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

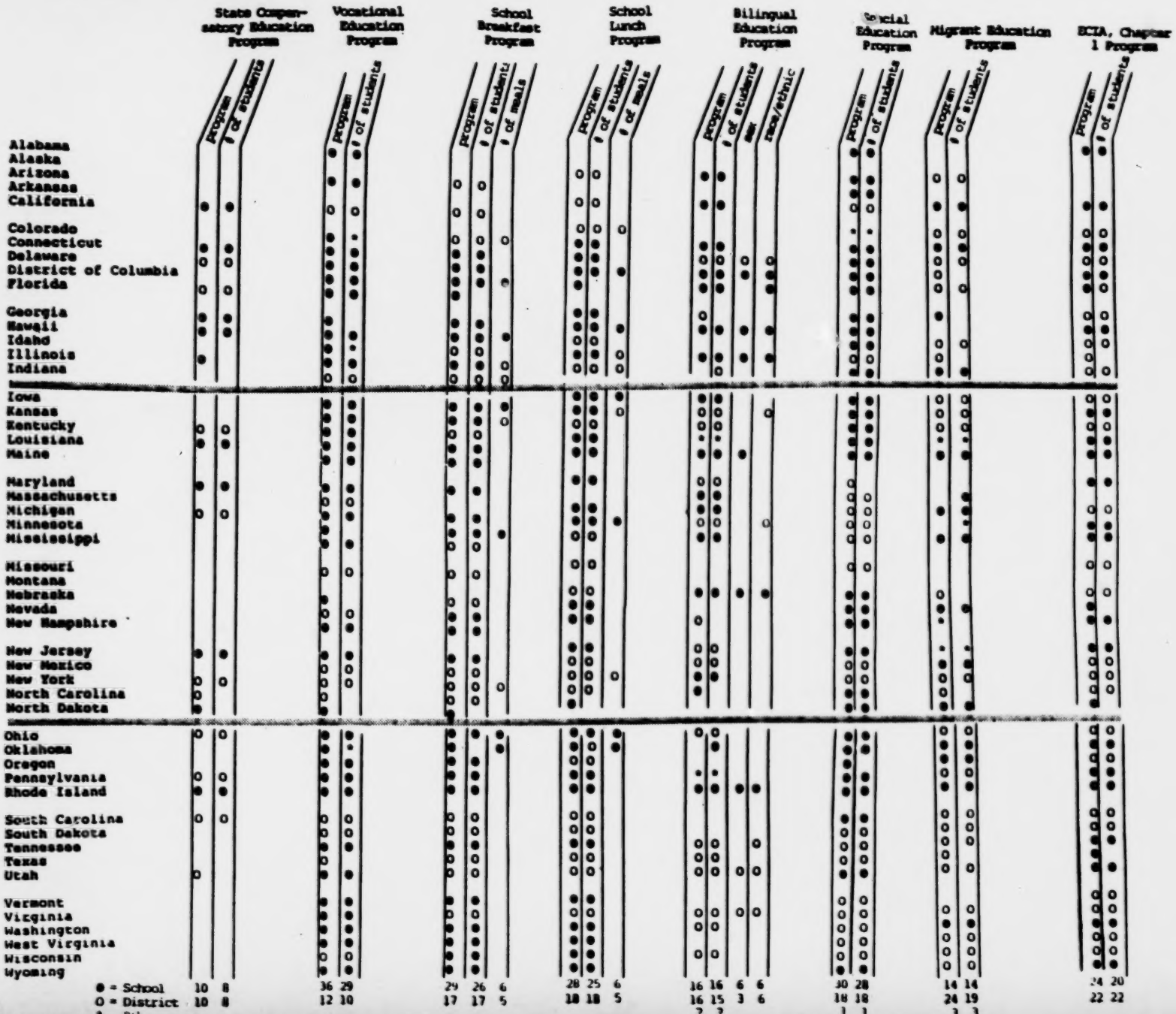

TABLE 4. STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY OF DATA ON SCHOOL STAFF